

**Will Women Save The Planet? The Effects of Gender Quotas on Women's Representation
and Environmental Legislation**

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Introduction

The climate crisis is the biggest existential threat of our age. It promises to bring with it unprecedented calamity through loss of life, property, and even something as abstract as our future. Even now, all around the world, there is untold suffering because of the effects of climate change. Droughts ravage parts of the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa while floods destroy places like Central Germany and Pakistan. Locust swarms four times the size of New York City descend upon crops in Kenya, Sudan and Ethiopia. This is against the backdrop of fires in the Arctic, the devastation of biodiversity globally, and the ongoing water crisis that threatens to engulf entire communities in war. It goes without saying that this is one of the most important struggles of our lives.

This year marked the 27th iteration of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, or Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC (COP27). This is the global gathering of countries to discuss the unfolding crisis and come up with workable solutions. Even mired in protests and controversy about the sustainability of the conference itself, one more thing is glaringly clear: those at the helm of the discussions are overwhelmingly male. This has been a reality for the longest time: heads of states and other delegates are often men, which makes this unsurprising. The discussion of climate change should involve everyone because it affects everyone. However, just as it disproportionately affects communities in the global South, it poses an even greater challenge for women worldwide.

In Somalia, for example, it is women who first suffer the brunt of increased desertification (Ismail & Jibrell 2018). As a pastoral community, Somali women will take out the cattle and notice that they have to travel further and further for water. Girls and women internationally,

whose job it is to get water for the household for cooking and cleaning, will leave

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school, or not attend in the first place, precisely because of these conditions. This is one of the reasons governments and non-governmental organizations will build wells near schools: so that girls are able to get their education while still performing the roles they have been bequeathed in their respective communities.

The health of the environment is intricately connected to the daily lives and wellbeing of women. It makes sense to ask, therefore, whether this relationship is prioritized in the political sphere. To investigate this assertion, this paper will focus on the effect of gender quotas on women's representation in politics and subsequent environmental legislation.

It is important to understand whether this very popular mode of promoting gender parity

in politics is actually effective in enabling women's political autonomy through the introduction and subsequent passing of environmental laws that have intricate effects on the lives of women in different places. To find out more on this topic, this paper will seek to compare different countries and their experience with this political tool. As of 2021, gender quotas have been adopted in about 121 countries in one form or another (Cruz & Rivera, 2021). Some of the countries that have adopted/previously adopted the policy include: Afghanistan, Kenya, the United Kingdom, Belgium and Argentina. The main question this paper seeks to answer is: How does increased women representation in politics via gender quotas interact with environmental policy creation and implementation?

Studying this topic will enable the addition of knowledge about how different countries' political, social and economic backgrounds interact to affect how women are treated in politics. This will involve finding out whether increased female representation translates to better policies for women being passed, and whether the quota system encourages women's entry into the political arena. If the quota system exists to bring in more women into politics only for them to

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be further ignored, it is necessary to find out that information. It will also be interesting to find out whether this stepping stone enables the women to launch into other roles politically, or whether they are cast in the 'women representative' role forever. Climate change and environmental concerns are some of the biggest threats of our age. Finding out how gender quotas impact this field of legislation is important and necessary for the future.

Much of the literature focuses on the empirical numbers and percentages of women involved in politics because of the salience of gender quotas. This includes discussions about the different types of gender quota types: reserved seats, where specific positions are purely set aside

for women; voluntary party lists, with different parties opting into using lists that balance the representation of men and women on their party ballots; and legislated candidate quotas, which have provisions about the percentage of candidates allowed according to their gender. Ironically, this empirical data hardly tells the full story about policy implementation and subsequent improvement of women's lives specifically in the cultural and social arena (Sacchet, 2008). It is necessary to seek out and develop measures to accurately assess the involvement of women in politics: are they being empowered to make changes once they get into office? Do they have the autonomy to utilize agenda setting power and get their priorities on the Parliamentary floor and passed after debate? This paper seeks to find that out.

Literature Review and Theory

Several authors have written about gender quotas and their impact on different levels of political leadership. Clayton, for example, focuses on the impact of gender quotas that are randomly assigned to different electoral districts in Lesotho (2014). The policy meant that a random district would be chosen, whereby only women were allowed to run for a position as a councilor. Using survey data collected from Afro-barometer, she compared citizens' attitudes

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towards local and national government following the introduction of the gender quota system in their assigned districts. After performing many regression analyses, the results showed that the influence of traditional chiefs is reduced in the electoral districts that were reserved for female leaders. Given that the chieftaincy position in Lesotho has been historically patriarchal, this finding is at least promising: showing that the introduction of gender quotas can serve to corrode traditionally held beliefs, even if temporarily, and through citizen perception.

Other authors focus on how the gender quota system affects women representation in

politics over the long term. In some cases, they find that gender quotas help get female candidates elected, but not necessarily re-elected/appointed (O'Brien & Rickney 2016). Once again, the authors use a linear regression model to examine the effect of the gender quota system on gender parity in Swedish party politics. One of the effects the gender quota system had in Sweden was giving parties that did not have many women represented in them a chance to catch up to the parties that were more egalitarian. Going forward, the policy also accelerated the rate at which women were involved in politics both on a national and local level.

In the review conducted by Pande and Ford, they evaluated how different bodies react to the gender quota policies, both in the political and corporate world (2011). Focusing on India and Norway's respective gender quota policies, but also drawing on data from other countries, they found that male incumbent leaders who may feel threatened by the policies would look for ways to work around them. Firms that were wary of the gender quota rule on their boards would also go out of their way to dilute the influence of the policy. This reality echoes the concerns raised by multiple authors about how gender quotas would result in backlash against women, leading to their subsequent exit from the political arena (Clayton 2014).

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Apart from the goal of inclusion and increased diversity in governance, gender quotas are purportedly introduced in order to facilitate policies that will center women/empower them more. This is based on the idea that women have different policy preferences than men. In sub-Saharan Africa especially, some authors predict that policy differences are predicted by the levels of financial independence and social vulnerability for women (Gottlieb et al, 2016). They predicted that women would support policies surrounding infrastructure less than men, relatively, if their levels of financial independence were reduced. Additionally, they predicted that women would

support policies about clean water provision more than men, as that is tied to their social position. Using survey data from Afro-barometer, they found mixed support for their hypotheses. They did find that women with lower levels of financial independence prioritized infrastructure less, but that the association between their vulnerability measures and water prioritization was lacking.

On the further prediction that men and women have different policy preferences, some of the literature dwells on the fact that an increased representation of women both in the electorate and as policymakers results in investment in health initiatives (Doepke et al 2011). Furthermore, the link between women's rights and overall economic development seems to go both ways, with higher levels of women's rights seemingly resulting in higher levels of a country's economic development, and vice versa. This would be a promising idea to investigate further, as the introduction of gender quotas would mean that, if correctly executed, the women newly in power would push their respective countries into economic prosperity. Some authors have pointed out that women are more inclined to prioritize environmental sustainability, and subsequently enact more environmentally protective policies (Ramstetter & Habbersack, 2020). Famously, Wangari Maathai, as one of the first female Members of Parliament in Kenya, promoted the

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empowerment of women through conserving trees as a way of environmental sustainability (Maathai, 2010). The Green Belt Movement was thus instrumental in improving many women's lives, pointing to the different policy preferences that women, especially rural women in the Global South, have.

Descriptive and substantive representation is important (O'Brien & Rickney, 2016). However, some literature suggests that oppressed groups may uphold the status quo (in some

cases even more than the privileged) and provide legitimacy to the systems that do not support them (Van der Toorn et al, 2015). Participants in a psychological study who were made aware of their dependence on other more powerful parties in their lives were more likely to state that those systems that created those disparities are legitimate. This was true even when the study questions provided an alternate explanation for the unfairness of their life situation. This may bear broader implications for women who get elected and subsequently do not push for a change in the status quo. Additionally, there may be differences because of political leanings and geographical location: whether rural or urban representatives.

Some of the literature approaches the question of the impact of gender quotas in a different way, asking whether the goal of increased women representation by way of gender quotas places the burden on female politicians for their own development (Meier & Lombardo, 2013). This paper hopes to cover this particular topic, as it might be the case that women just entering the political arena are overwhelmed by the task of having to change a system that is entrenched in patriarchal modes of operation (Sacchet, 2008). It should be emphasized that even though this paper focuses on the impact of gender quotas on women's autonomy and rights through the passage of legislation, it is by no means just the female politicians' jobs to enable the advancement of women's liberation (Hawley, 2015). The responsibility should rest squarely on

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all members of society, as an introduction of women into the political arena only serves to make the whole field better. In fact, some articles have exhibited that the institution of gender quotas by way of zipper party lists resulted in increased competence of all politicians, especially the male ones (Besley et al., 2017). This provides some hope that the overall increased competence of elected leaders would result in better policies for both men and women, as well as increased

accountability to their voters.

Hypotheses or Theoretical Expectations

The hypotheses posited in this paper is that the election of more women through gender quotas leads to the creation of more environmentally protective legislation. It may go without saying that these policy effects would be seen when the women filling these gender quota positions are more progressive than conservative, depending on the individual country's level and definition of progressivism and other ideological terms. Overall, one of the mediating factors for gender quotas will be the strength of a country's institutions, which often predict how effectively elected representatives are able to introduce policy changes that are robust and beneficial to the larger population.

An underlying assumption, or mediating factor that is not directly studied in this paper is that gender quotas will lead to an increase in the number of women running for and elected into office. In some of the literature, it is described that the perception of women as adequate leaders increases in the wake of gender quotas (Allen & Cutts, 2013). This increase in public support seems to exist whether it results in concrete policymaking or not. It would hold, therefore, that once some women are elected into office, more women are inspired to run, and voters are more motivated to elect them as well. However, it is an established fact that this is a difficult position
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to be in: women elected into these positions have less incumbent advantage, and are more sensitive to voter views because of their vulnerability (O'Brien & Rickney, 2016). The relationship between gender quotas and environmental legislation, therefore, is thought to be mediated by the number of women actually elected into office. **Methods**

The research design for this study will be a comparative case study. This will enable me

to look at data from different countries, contrasting and comparing the different implementations of gender quotas and their subsequent policy effects. I use data collected from four different countries on a case by case basis to answer the research question. These are: Kenya, Lesotho, Brazil and the United Kingdom. These four countries have chosen to implement different forms of gender quota systems, and therefore lend themselves to analysis on how these different gender quota systems affect women's autonomy in Parliament. They are also countries with varying levels of institutional quality, cultural backgrounds and economic status.

Comparing the United Kingdom and Kenya, for example, will be useful as they have a shared colonial history, with the Kenyan constitution having several parts of it modelled from the British unwritten constitution as well as form of government. Kenya utilizes a gender quota system in the legislature whereby certain electoral seats are purely reserved for women, whereas in the UK the gender quotas are implemented at the party level.

Lesotho was chosen because of their unique gender quota system, whereby random municipalities are selected to have seats that can only be contested by female candidates. It is also a very small landlocked country in the middle of South Africa, meaning that data collected and results acquired from the country will strengthen the findings and be useful in making broader theoretical assertions.

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Brazil is one of the countries that has implemented gender quotas, but they have not been successful in getting female representation to a satisfactory percentage (Sacchet 2015). Brazil is thus included in the analysis in order to see what effects gender quotas have on women's autonomy in a country where the gender quotas have not necessarily translated in increased female representation in the legislature.

One of the sources of data for this study is the Gender Quotas Database, which contains data collected worldwide about gender quotas in politics. The UN statistics division and data from FAO was used, as well as the OECD. When available, this paper uses data about environmental legislation from government websites and NGOs. Additionally, this paper uses scholarly articles by other authors to investigate and back up findings. IPU Parline data was invaluable in providing a breakdown of the number of women in both Upper and Lower Houses (for Parliaments with a Bicameral Legislature) of the different countries for decades.

The National Archives in the United Kingdom were a valuable resource for this paper. In order to find the laws pertaining to environmental protection, I used the search tool to look for bills using key words such as ‘environment’, ‘waste’, ‘pollution’, ‘biodiversity’, ‘water’, ‘soil’ and ‘climate,’ and separated them by year. Afterwards, amendments and commencements or otherwise non-independent laws were removed from the count.

The presence and type of gender quota is the independent variable, while the dependent variable is the change in the number of environmental legislation pieces. The number of environmental laws passed directly tests the amount of influence that women have in their respective Parliaments. It is also a quantifiable way of measuring the prioritization of the environment after women’s numbers change in Parliament. The mediating factor is the number of women actually elected into office, which is another quantitative variable for correlations.

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Results

The central question this paper seeks to answer is about the efficacy of gender quotas as tools to further the cause of women empowerment in concrete ways. How do gender quotas work in regard to improving women’s autonomy? Additionally, this paper is interested in investigating

the relationship between the increased number of women elected through gender quotas and their impact on environmental legislation. The hypothesis is that more women elected through gender quotas will lead to more environmentally protective legislation.

As the earliest instituted gender quotas was in the late 1990s, the comparison for all cases has data from then, even if gender quotas were not introduced yet. Table 1 shows a summary of the different gender quota systems in the different countries as well as the amount of women actually in Parliament, up to 2022 (OECD, IPU 2022).

	Kenya	United Kingdom	Brazil	Lesotho
Gender quota type	Reserved seats 2/3rd gender rule	Voluntary party lists	Voluntary party lists Legislated party quotas	Voluntary party lists for 40 proportionally representative constituencies
Percentage of women Parliamentarians	23.4% (2022)	34.7% (2021)	17.7% (2022)	26.5% (2022)

International ranking of women in Parliament 99th 45th 129th 87th

Year introduced 2013 1997 1998 2012 Table 1: Summary data of gender quotas and the representation of women (2017 to 2022)

Kenya

Kenya's gender quota system exists in both the upper (National Assembly) and lower (Senate) house of legislation. According to the Kenyan Constitution, The National Assembly will

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have "...forty-seven women, each elected by the registered voters of the counties, each county constituting a single member constituency..." (Kenyan Constitution, Article 97, 2010). This role is referred to as the women representative role. The Senate, on the other hand, will have "...sixteen women members who shall be nominated by political parties according to their proportion of members of the Senate..." (Kenyan Constitution, Article 98, 2010).

The Constitution was voted on via referendum in 2010, and promulgated in 2011. The next general elections were held in 2013, however, making it so that 2013 was the first year the women representative role came into effect. In that year, a total of 40 women were elected into the National assembly and the Senate (IPU Parline, 2022). In 2017, out of the 290 members of Parliament elected by voters from each constituency, only 18 were women (Parliament of Kenya). The 47 women representatives were thus critical in making sure that the national Assembly was not in violation of the constitution, which has a $\frac{2}{3}$ gender rule, maintaining that one gender cannot be represented above the $\frac{2}{3}$ margin. In 2022, the numbers are roughly the same, with a slight uptick in the number of women in the National Assembly.

There has certainly been an increased number of environmental laws since the 1990s. In general, there has also been an increase in the number of women holding elected office. This increased from 6 (making up about 3% of the then Unicameral legislature) in 1992 to 16 and then 21 in 2002 and 2007 respectively. Once the Bicameral Parliament was introduced, the number of women increased further, especially with the representative seats, from 22 to 76 to 82

in the Upper House and 18 and 21 in the Lower House (IPU Parline, 2022).

There have been a number of significant laws introduced in recent years that pertain to the environment. 2016 saw the passing of a large number of laws concerned with the environment. Of note were The Water Act, which embedded citizens' rights to safe water and sanitation in the Constitution; the Climate Change Act, which committed to tackling climate change even as it moves toward development; the National Drought Management Authority Act and the Forest Conservation and Management Act, which both tackle maintaining forest cover and sustainable environmental practices in order to curb drought and encroaching desertification.

In 2019, both the Petroleum and Energy Act were passed (African Legal Information Institute, 2019). The bodies of both acts contain information on the expectation of compliance with environmental health and safety laws. It also emphasizes the pollution aspect of energy production, which is a component that is deeply connected to greenhouse gasses but is often relegated to the backseat in favour of profits. Given the composition of Parliament at this time, it is plausible that the presence of the elected women officials had some effect on including those specifications.

These results lend some support to the hypothesis presented about environmental legislation, as the increase in the number of women trends positively with the number of environmental laws passed. Additionally, the specific laws have to do with environmental conservation and preserving water sources, which are intrinsically tied to the needs of women, rural and urban, in the country.

Parliament year	1992-1997	1997-2002-2007- 2013-	2022-2027
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		2002	2007	2013	2017*	2017-2022
Number of women in Parliament	6	6	16	21	22/18	76/21
Percentage (Lower House)	3%	3%	7.1%	9.4%	26.5%	30.9%
Number of Environmental Legislation passed	1	--	5	11	8	–

Table 2: Comparison between the number of women in Parliament and the environmental legislation passed in Kenya.

*Constitution introduces Bicameral legislature as well as reserved seats for women

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United Kingdom

The United Kingdom does not have a legislated gender quota system. Instead, they use voluntary party lists in the House of Commons to elect their members of Parliament. In the 1997 general election, the Labour Party first used All-Women Shortlists (AWS) to increase the participation of women in electoral politics. These were lists whereby certain constituencies only had women on the ballot. There were 101 women elected into Parliament on the Labour Party ticket in that year, while the total number of women in Parliament was 120 (Allen & Campbell 2016). It was not until 2001, however, that they brought back the All-Women shortlists and then subsequently implemented the voluntary party lists in all their candidate selections. As of March 2022, there were 225 women elected to the House of Commons (UK Parliament).

There is a lot of variability in the environmental legislation passed in the UK, ranging

from The Environment Act of 1995 which has different provisions about pollution, waste management and biodiversity (the legislation in itself contains stipulations about when different sections get implemented, so that the law is executed over time) to the Water Environment and Water Services Act of 2003 which lays out different measures protecting water bodies and other regulations therein. The Climate Change Act of 2008 also contains information about how to address the evolving climate crisis by setting goals about carbon emissions by 2050, as well as waste reduction schemes (The National Archives).

This particular example provides less support for the proposed hypothesis, despite having even more women elected into Parliament because of gender quotas than Kenya, while also having a longer duration of implementation. The number of environmental legislation passed in the years following the introduction of the gender quota system does not correspond to the increased number of women represented. The number of women in Parliament certainly

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ballooned after the implementation of gender quotas in 1997, first doubling in size and then increasing henceforth. For a period between 2005 to 2015, environmental laws were passed at correspondingly higher levels. In the years since 2017, however, it seems that the number of environmental laws being passed have decreased.

It is worthwhile to note that there are several amendments and additions to the laws that happen very regularly (The National Archives). This analysis only took into account the number of individual and unique laws that were passed and had to do with the environment. The numerous amendments, however, show that these topics stay on the discussion docket and are often revised.

Due to the use of Commencements in the UK (whereby some legislation is passed with

provisions of different sections coming into execution at a later date), environmental policies and legislation is still carried out. However, it is not necessarily at the behest of the House of Commons of the year it goes into effect, and thus cannot be ascribed to them. Gender quotas, and subsequently elected women’s input in environmental legislation, are therefore more difficult to link in this case. The trend of positive correlation in the early years stands out.

Parliament year	1992-1997	1997-2001* 2001-2005 2005-2010 2010-2015	2015-2017	2017-2019	2019-
Number of women in Parliament	60	120 118 128 143	191	208	220
Percentage	9.2%	18.2% 17.9% 19.8%	29.4%		33.8%
Number of Environmental Legislation passed	11	9 13 22 14	3	1	3

Table 3: Female Parliamentarians compared to environmental legislation passed in the UK

* Labour Party introduces All Women Shortlist for their party lists

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Brazil

Brazil has two houses of Parliament: The Upper House (Senate) and Lower House (Chamber of Deputies). There are voluntary quotas as well as legislated quotas for the Lower House.

The Brazilian Constitution mandates gender quotas in the number of candidates presented for election i.e. it requires a minimum number of women to be running in the Senate Election,

but there are no legal repercussions for not following the requirement. Brazil has historically struggled with women representation in parliament, never going above 20% in the total number of women in these elected positions (IPU: Parline, 2022). In the Chamber of Deputies, the requirement is the same, although there is a stipulation that if there is an overrepresentation of a singular gender (70% and over), the party has to reduce the number of candidates of that particular sex to bring it to the acceptable level. However, this also often goes unenforced because in order for the ‘alarms’ to be raised, the candidate threshold has to be surpassed, which rarely happens, so the proportions go unchecked.

The number of environmental laws being passed in Brazil has trended upwards over time. Overall, so has the number of women, even if the efficacy of their gender quotas to do so has been called into question. Again, this case provides little to no support of the hypothesis that more women in Parliament results in the passage of more environmental laws. During key bumps of women representation in Parliament, such as in 1998 and 2006, there does seem to be a small relationship, but its significance cannot be emphasized.

There was no information about environmental laws passed in Brazil after the year 2012. This means that there is a possibility that more data exists that was just not found during the scope of this research.

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Parliament year	1994-1998	1998- 2002- 2003- 2006- 2010- 2014- 2002* 2003 2006 2010 2014	2018-2022
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		2018	
Number of women in Parliament	36	29 44 32 45 44 51	77
Percentage	7%	5.7% 8.6% 6.2% 8.8% 8.6% 9.9%	15 %
Number of Environmental Legislation passed	28	35 25 13 46 9 _	–

Table 4: Comparison of women in Parliament and the number of environmental laws passed in Brazil

* Gender quotas introduced

Lesotho

Lesotho has a Bicameral Legislature, consisting of the Lower House (National Assembly), and the Senate. Lesotho's gender quota system in Parliament involves the use of 'zebra lists' (alternating names of male and female candidates) by each party for the 40 Proportionally Representative seats in the National Assembly out of 120 (National Assembly Act 2011). There is no legislative mandate for gender quotas in the Senate, which consists of a mix of hereditary and appointed positions (Rakolobe & 'Nyane 2021). For local elections, they institute a random assignment of constituencies, whereby a set number of constituencies will only have women on the ballot (Clayton 2012).

In 2012, women made up 45% of the proportional representation fraction of the elected officers, evidently because of the instituted gender quota rule (Matlho, 2012). This is in comparison to the mere 18.7% of women elected to the other positions that use a First Past The Post election system. Overall, there has been an increase in women in Parliament since the quotas were instituted. In terms of environmental laws, they have also trended upwards. Given the amount of data available on the number of laws passed, this particular example provides

mixed support for the hypothesis.

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Once the gender quotas were introduced in 2012, there was an increase in the number of environmental legislation that passed. Some of the Legislation included the Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority Water and Sewage Treatment Facilities Safety Standards 2013, which dealt with the regulations surrounding water sanitation and sewage treatment, with stipulations about the laws to be followed by the body in charge of electricity and water management (African Legal Information Institute, 2019). The non-exhaustive nature of the list of environmental laws means that there is a possibility that more laws concerning the environment were passed but have not been found for this particular analysis.

Parliament year	1990-1993	1993-1997	1998-2002	2002-2007	2007-2012	2012-2015*	2015-2017	2017-
Number of women in Parliament	8**	3	3	14	28	30	30	27
Percentage	7.3%	24.2%	3.8%	11.7%	23.5%	25%	25%	22.1%
Number of Environmental Legislation passed	–	2	3	1	6	4	–	–

Table 5: Comparison of women in Parliament and the number of environmental laws passed in Lesotho

*Gender quotas introduced

**Before they got a Bicameral Legislature

Country	Support of Hypothesis
Kenya	Supported
United Kingdom	Some support
Brazil	No support
Lesotho	Mixed support

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Discussion

This paper set out to find the link between gender quotas and the subsequent passing of environmental legislation in different countries' legislative bodies. It was expected that the introduction of gender quotas would lead to an increased number of women in Parliament, which would ultimately result in more environmental legislation getting introduced and passing into law. The case studies used to investigate this hypothesis provided mixed support for the hypothesis. In Kenya, the introduction of gender quotas is positively correlated with the number of environmental legislation, especially landmark environmental legislation. In Lesotho, the effect is subdued yet marginally present. In the United Kingdom, the effect is manifested, with the uptick of the number of women after the introduction of gender quotas corresponding with a marginal increase in the number of environmental laws passed. In Brazil, the introduction of gender quotas did not lead to a significant increase in the number of women in Parliament, and the positive relationship with the number environmental legislation was also not found.

The literature abounds with various examples of the difference in policy preferences between men and women (Doepke et al., 2011). This is especially true when it comes to environmental policy (Gottleib et al., 2016). It was thus paramount to see whether the increased

election of women into positions of power would translate into more environmentally protective policies. Some authors found that women in the European Parliament were more likely to vote for environmental legislation than men, even though both groups expressed concern for the environment at the same rate (Ramstetter & Habersack, 2020). This was true even after they controlled for nationality and ideology. The results of this paper provide tentative support toward this assertion, with the hope that future research can be conducted using different measures to pursue out an effect.

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The findings of the current case studies shows that gender quotas may be a useful tool in combating climate change and other environmentally threatening crises, if only they are effective in getting an increased number of women involved in politics. It may be the case that once women are in the halls of power, they do not get a fair chance to engage in decision making for a variety of reasons, one of them being the denial of opportunities to speak during deliberation (Karpowitz et al., 2012). Institutionally, it is always the case that places that have stronger institutions are more effective at translating policies into action. When policies are on the books but not implemented, for example, that sets progress back.

It may also be the case that in order for the numbers to translate into policy, a ‘critical mass’ of women is needed. As it stands, even with the efforts mentioned, the number of women is not even at 50% representation in the countries studied, which would reflect their population in the respective countries. More women would hopefully make it so that ignoring these important policy issues would be impossible, and change would occur. Perhaps gender quotas would be further useful in achieving this goal, but other means of recruiting women into the political sphere must be utilized to ensure this happens. Both the representation of women and the solving

of the global climate crisis are important goals, and emphasizing this relationship would be a good strategy going forward.

The findings of this paper also make it clear that for institutions and political tools to work to effect the change, they have to be enforced. If a rule or law exists but goes unenforced, the intentions do not matter. Gender quotas may be a powerful tool to introduce more women into the political arena, subsequently leading to different laws being passed that are more inclusive and representative of their respective societies, but if women are not empowered to do so, then it becomes an uphill battle to make it work.

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There is a lot of literature surrounding gender quotas, and their influence on different facets of living. As a still evolving political tool, it will be interesting to see whether they fall out of favour in the years to come, or if more countries will adopt them as it becomes more untenable to have such an imbalance of power in legislation. The United States, for example, is a country that does not have gender quotas, and has a poor track record of both the representation of women in Congress and the passage of environmentally protective laws. Future research may be useful to conceptualize whether this might be a direction that the US would like to go. Given the United States government's recalcitrance in changing its mode of operation, that is unlikely to happen there. However, recent political developments concerning women's rights might call for such measures.

In general, there is an uptick in the number of environmental laws being passed overall. The effect established in this paper stands, however, because the countries chosen for the case studies are markedly different. This makes it hard to envision what a third variable that causes the effect found here would be. This paper does not claim that no such variable could exist, but rather emphasizes that the countries were chosen to try and reduce this particular effect.

Additionally, this paper only focused on four countries' environmental legislation being passed through Parliament, institutions that are notoriously hard to get anything passed to begin with. Future research would do well to focus on gender quotas in Cabinets, or the Executive branch of governments, which often have the task of implementing policies and will usually have policies of their own. There might also be more data to work with in that regard. A quantitative look at exactly how women and men vote once environmental legislation is brought to the floor on a larger scale would be definitively more helpful going forward. In terms of bureaucracies, such as agencies tasked with managing environmental provisions, future research could focus on whether an increased number of women results in a greater emphasis on these issues.

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Finding data on the laws being passed in different countries was a tall order. Often, the websites for respective national assemblies did not have a compiled list of information about the bills being drafted and passed. This provided a challenge. It is entirely possible that a wealth of laws have been passed regarding the environment, but were just not found during the course of this research. In the cases where archives of all laws passed were available, it is possible that more laws were passed that had to do with the environment, but were not unearthed because they were not tagged as such i.e. a law about the environment could be named 'The Novel Act'.

As much as women have different policy preferences than men and are more inclined to act on their environmental beliefs (Doepke et al., 2011; Ramstetter & Habersack, 2020), they are not a monolith. Future research could focus on some of the differences that exist among women who are represented in Parliament.

Conclusion

This paper investigated the link between gender quotas and the election of women who

subsequently pass environmental legislation. A small positive correlation was found between the number of women in power and the environmental laws passed in Parliament in some countries, but the relationship was not robust enough to be replicated in all the case studies. Limitations included the amount of data found for the respective countries, and the insufficient information uniformly across countries. Future research can expand on this paper by choosing other countries to study, as well as comparing countries that have gender quotas versus those that don't in terms of environmental legislation.

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